



PHOTO BY DAWNA ALPHONSE

Fred Randall, assistant principal



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Pam Farrill, assistant principal

Welcome new assistant principals

Dr. STEPHEN LOBBAN
MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

The Shrewsbury Middle School welcomes two new assistant principals for the start of the 2003-04 school year. Ms. Pam Farrill, who served as Dean of Students at the Littleton Middle School for the previous two school years, will be the Grade 8 assistant principal at SHS. Mr. Fred Randall, who served as assistant principal at the Overlook Middle School in the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District last year, will be the Grade 6 assistant principal at SMS.

Pam Farrill brings varied educational accomplishments to the students, teachers, parents and Shrewsbury community. These accomplishments include: special education teaching experience at the elementary, middle and secondary levels; chairing the Littleton Middle School Planning Committee; maintaining standards for student behavior grades 6-8; facilitating alignment of regular and special education programs with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks; establishing a technology partnership with the Littleton Educator's Fund, Compaq and Learnout Hausbie Inc. for the development of a special education reading program; and implementing a school safety plan and lockdown procedure.

Fred Randall also brings several educational accomplishments to his position. His accomplishments include: social studies and humanities teaching at the middle level; maintaining discipline standards for grades 6-8; chairing the Overlook Middle School Emergency Response Team; facilitating curriculum alignment with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks; and serving as a Christopher's Haven Fund Inc. board member dedicated to providing temporary housing to assist pediatric cancer patients and their families.

Both of these individuals welcome the challenge of working with middle level students and recognize the opportunities that accompany these challenges. Pam Farrill and Fred Randall bring a level of commitment to each SMS student's success commensurate with the long established standards of the Shrewsbury schools and community we serve.

FY2004 budget recap

KRISTINA PALOMBA
CHAIRPERSON, SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The Shrewsbury school department's final budget for fiscal 2004 is \$33,986,104.

This budget figure was the result of much discussion between the school committee and school department administration. Input from staff, community members and parents of our students was also considered and impacted the choices made in the final budget. The school budget was supported by both the Board of Selectman and Finance Committee and was approved by Town Meeting in May.

The initial budget presented to the school committee was \$34,730,886. This reflected an 8.9% increase over fiscal '03. It already included \$289,165 in reductions. District goals, such as maintaining the current level of services and responding to enrollment needs, were the basis for the development of the fiscal '04 budget.

The last part of the typical equation for calculating the school department budget revolves around new initiatives. These requests come from central office staff, principals, and directors. They are proposals for improvement of the educational program. The \$34M budget plan did not include any funding for "new initiatives." This is the first time in the past nine years this has occurred.

The first budget was seen as a starting point. The dire fiscal times at the state level produced caution in the projection of state aid. Chapter 70 funding accounted for 27% of the school department budget, \$8,754,774, in fiscal '03. A significant reduction of 15-20%, as was originally predicted, was going to be a serious problem for the schools and the town of Shrewsbury. Keeping this type of fiscal environment in mind, the school department and the school committee began to consider reductions and alternative funding for programs.

Budget Reductions Necessary

A total of \$744,782 was eventually reduced from the first budget presented. The cuts realized included the loss of several programs, such as third grade Spanish and fourth grade stringed instrument program, a 25% reduction of instructional aide support, reduction of a kindergarten teacher, reduction in the health program, reduced media aides at two schools, reduction of a secretarial position, and reduction of a technology support position.

Many of the original proposals for new initiatives concerned materials and personnel needed due to increasing student enrollment and responding to changes in the *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*. Neither of these are factors we have control over. It is disappointing and alarming that we could in no way fund any improvements.

The Shrewsbury schools will open in September 2003 with more students than the previous school year and less staff. Enrollment is expected to increase by 256 students, 4.8%; we will now be a district of 5,574. The corps of staff will be reduced by 18 FTE (full-time equivalents) in the fall. There is no doubt that our schools and the programs they offer our chil-

dren will be different this coming year.

School Department returns funds

Since the budget was approved, several positive things have occurred. The most important was that the Chapter 70 funding to Shrewsbury increased to \$10,287,704. This allowed for an increase to the town's total budget

budget.

It has been the goal of the school committee and school administration to continue to work cooperatively with the town manager, the selectmen and the finance committee to arrive at budgets that are fit and fair to our students needs and the realities of the fiscal outlook in Shrewsbury. The best example of this cooperative atmosphere is the passage of every school budget in the last ten years and the confidence of the school committee to return to the town general fund of over \$350,000 in the last six years. Keeping this in mind, we look toward fiscal 2005. The 45 Oak Street facility will open as a second middle school. Floral Street School was the last additional school that was opened. It required a 13% increase in the school department budget to meet the needs of the new school.

Looking Ahead to FY2005

Considering the fiscal constraints at the state and local level, it is the school committee and school administration's wish to be proactive regarding the budget needs resulting from opening another school. Therefore, the budget process will be on an accelerated schedule in the fall. It is our hope to have a preliminary budget in October or November of 2003. It is our assumption that this will allow everyone: students, staff, parents, municipal boards, and community members sufficient opportunity to weigh in on the goals and values around the budget. What is decided will directly affect the type of education delivered to our children as of fiscal 2005. I urge you to keep informed and let not only the school committee but also our other boards know of your high standards and aspirations for our children and their education.

Twirling the time away



PHOTO BY DAWNA ALPHONSE

Elizabeth Goss prepares her science experiment to study the sound that it makes. She was one of over 1,000 children attending summer camps held throughout Shrewsbury this summer.